

# Pain, anger and youth resistance: Police racial awareness training and the contemplations of a black mother

*Lurraine Jones*

*I am an Angry Black Woman. Unapologetically, rationally and rightfully so. I am blistering mad! I am frustrated and enraged! I am devastated, and my blood is boiling at a temperature so hot that I think my heart might stop beating at any given moment! I am so angry that I feel neurotic; it feels as if my mind has been lost to my critical eyes.*  
(Griffin, 2012: 138)

## Introduction

This chapter analyses the complexities and conflicts of using an anti-racism employee training tool that is based on a racial epistemological framework that was created, built and shaped by institutional Whiteness. This human resources tool is used to practise police diversity training and therefore the policing of UK black communities. I contend that many inner-city UK police services have been historically shaped by institutionally racist policies and practices; and the interactions of rank and file police officers with black communities lead to the oft-quoted trope of black communities feeling ‘over policed and under protected’. I explore my reactions as a black mother and engage with the challenges of racialization and the topic of ‘race’ in police diversity training and what I consider to be its unintended consequences for black youth.

## Exploring emotions and rhetorical commitment to anti-racist practice

Diversity training is an organizational training tool, which teaches employees the business, legal and ethical reasons for inclusion, respect and cultural sensitivity in the workplace. My PhD research seeks to advance how racialized experience and positioning is manifested in diversity

training within policing. 'Positioning' in this research context refers to majority white ethnic and black minority ethnic employees working within the predominantly white institution of policing. As Ahmed points out, 'if diversity is a way of viewing or even picturing an institution, then it might allow only *some* [emphasis added] things to come into view' (Ahmed 2012: 14).

What has come into view for me in my research is that as employees engage with and experience the topic of 'race' within diversity training, they will hold racialized, subjective views towards the materials and the trainer. Key elements of diversity training are personal growth and cultural awareness, and therefore I consider it crucial to understand and contribute to the contemporary racial politics discussion by exploring whether participants of this training do feel empowered and valued and empowered to value. Furthermore, I explore if and how they are able to align themselves with and beyond a rhetorical level of their employees' business, ethical and moral agenda. It is most certainly a positive aim within diversity training that participants are encouraged to 'confront' or 'address' their personal behaviour and attitudes to move towards anti-racist practices. It is also important to contemplate the following question: what might the consequences be within and for the organization in policing culturally diverse boroughs or communities if diversity training is not conducted?

As a black woman of mixed heritage, mother of four black children, and university lecturer involved in researching police diversity training, my chapter is influenced by these various identities. I set out to comprehend the nature of my pain and anger in facing the daily discriminatory treatment encountered by black youth in their interactions with white policing on UK streets.

In the context of the turbulence and antagonism directed towards the black community by white police since the 1950s, my research explores the anti-racism tool of diversity training. However, as a black woman, mother and educator, I recognize that such a tool is inevitably based on a racial epistemological framework created, built and shaped by institutional whiteness. My doctoral thesis positions itself within the intellectual spaces that black academics have created within white educational institutions to challenge white hegemonic discourses of racialization. I position myself as a black, female, senior lecturer in higher education with a desire to confront an unjust world that profoundly impacts on my life and my loved ones. My research is best described in terms of black feminist writer Toni Morrison's 1992 *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Morrison explains the invisibility of whiteness in literature as a fishbowl that contains

fish and water. The fishbowl itself provides meaning as it contains the water and the fish, but one invariably focuses on the fish swimming in the water, and not the constraints of the fishbowl itself.

### **The murder of a black youth that changed a nation: 'Look – A Negro'**

“‘Dirty nigger!’ Or simply, ‘Look, a Negro!’.” (Fanon, 1986)

On 22 April 1993 in what has been called by the BBC documentary *The Murder That Changed a Nation* (2018), black teenager Stephen Lawrence was murdered at a bus stop in Eltham, south-east London in an unprovoked, racially motivated attack by five white male teenagers. Only two of the white perpetrators were convicted of Stephen's murder almost 20 years later, using DNA. A Scotland Yard spokesman recently stated:

Despite previous public appeals, rigorous pursuit of all remaining lines of inquiry, numerous reviews and every possible advance in forensic techniques, the Met investigation team is now at a stage where without new information the investigation is unlikely to progress further, and this was explained to the family earlier this year. (Dodd, 2018)

Much has been written about Stephen's murder, and several commentators have referred to it as a watershed moment for UK policing. I remember watching the sad events unfold at the time I was the mother of two small children, and pregnant with twin boys due that June. As is often the case when such tragic events take place, one wonders what kind of world one is bringing children into, and I cried for Doreen and Neville Lawrence at the loss of their child. Perhaps because I was pregnant, I became very emotional about the state of a racist country where my own black children were most certainly going to be subject to racism at points in their lives, as myself, friends and families had been. My pain and anger grew as I followed the ensuing Metropolitan Police debacle of the initial investigation into Stephen's murder.

### **Black mother confronting whiteness**

The three-part BBC documentary of 2018, *Stephen: The Murder That Changed a Nation*, detailed the events leading up to and following Stephen's murder. Although Neville Lawrence unquestionably sought justice for his son, it was clear that he had withdrawn into himself with grief. So it was a mother's enduring anger and tenacity that drove Doreen Lawrence to continue fighting publicly for over a decade to see her son's murderers convicted.

At Stephen's inquest, a stoic Baroness Lawrence stood up and read her speech:

When my son was murdered, the police saw my son as a criminal, belonging to a gang ... my son's crime is that he was walking down the road looking for a bus that would take him home. Our crime is living in a country where the justice system supports racist murderers against innocent people. The value that this white, racist country puts on black lives is evident. But still, we followed all the steps open to us, but one by one the doors were closed in our faces. In my opinion, what happened was the way of the judicial system making a clear statement, to make clear to black people that in this country, that before the law, their lives were worth nothing. (Greengrass, 1999, based on Lawrence, 1999, 341–2)

Baroness Lawrence spoke about how, even though she felt extremely angry on many occasions, she couldn't show it, least of all to the white media. In her acute experiences of how black people were regarded as criminals, Doreen Lawrence was arguably all too aware of the 'Angry Black Women' stereotype that Ashley posits:

such stereotypes include the myth of the angry Black woman that characterizes these women as aggressive, ill tempered, illogical, overbearing, hostile, and ignorant without provocation. (2014: 2)

The historicity of the stereotype of the Strong Black Mother, one who endures, one who does not feel pain or show emotion, has been well documented (Dance 1979, hooks 1992, Hill Collins, 2000). Indeed, these 'emotionless' black mothers have been the subject of some black writers, as Dance explores. In these literatures the relationship between the black mother and her son is captured through the notion of the Madonna and Eve, the latter succumbing to the lure of white society, 'and that this Black Eve offers to her Black men the poisonous apple that will destroy him, that will repress his spirit and vitality, kill his pride in his Blackness, and render him impotent in a hostile white world (1979: 124).

For Dance, the antithetical Madonna figure is a woman 'who suffers the indignities of slavery; sets out on the quest for freedom; embodies the unfulfilled dreams, the suffering, the bitter struggles, the endurance, and the strength of her people; and who finally overcomes' (1979: 124). One can argue that the lived experience of contemporary black motherhood has no relation to these biblical analogies but, as Roberts points out, 'American

culture reveres no Black Madonna; it upholds no popular image of a black mother nurturing her child' (1994: 874).

Lawson Bush (2004) argues that although mothering issues can be similar for white mothers raising white sons and black mothers raising black sons, the most pertinent difference is that the black mothers are forging, developing and maintaining mother-son relationships in the context of white supremacy. Of course, the white mother raising black sons also requires further exploration but the black mother, from African enslavement to contemporary society, bears a particularly heavy burden in the complex racial socialization of her black children into an often antagonistic society. The black mother must cope with the psychosocial effects of teaching her children how to operate and negotiate life while at all times being mindful of any interactions with the police in order to even stay alive within white systemic, structural and institutional racism.

### **Criminalization, policing and concern for black lives**

Contemporary UK statistics show that the police's use of physical restraint is more prevalent on black and minority ethnic people than on whites. Proportionally more black people have died in police custody than white people, and police use greater force towards black people with mental health problems (Bulman, 2018). So it is not surprising that the black community have little confidence in those who police them.

Mark Duggan's death in 2011 and the death in 2017 of four young black men in police custody – Edson da Costa, Darren Cumberbatch, Shane Bryant and Rashan Charles – are among the fatal encounters that lead critics and activists to contend that black people receive much harsher treatment than white people in every part of the mental health and criminal justice system. Statistics also show unconscious bias and racial profiling as playing a major part in unequal treatment. Although stop and searches have fallen across all ethnic groups since 2017, they did so at different rates. Stops of white people have fallen most markedly (28 per cent), and although stops of black people have fallen by 11 per cent, they are still more than eight times more likely to be stopped than those who are white (Hargreaves, J., Husband, H. Linehan, C., 2017). The Lammy Review of the UK criminal justice system (referred to in earlier chapters) shows evidence that despite making up just 14 per cent of the population, minority ethnic men and women make up 25 per cent of prisoners, while over 40 per cent of young people in custody are from black backgrounds (Lammy, 2017: 3). An insightful study by Henning (2018) points to the fact that white police officers tend to overestimate the ages of black boys and underestimate the

ages of their white peers. Moreover, Henning's work posits that black boys who experience harassment and discrimination from white police officers are left with hugely negative attitudes toward the police as they grow to adulthood.

### **Black British feminists facing up to such injustices**

In light of the black youth crisis we have on our hands, Etienne (2016) draws attention to black feminist epistemology as being ethically bound to shared accountability and social responsibility. Strident African-American activists and intellectuals such as Angela Davis, Audre Lorde, bell hooks and Patricia Hill Collins have created a distinct theoretical standpoint of the black feminist. In the words of Hill Collins: 'Black women intellectuals have laid a vital analytic foundation for a distinctive standpoint on self, community and society and, in doing so, created a black women's intellectual tradition' (2000: 45). African-American feminists maintain that 'feminism is white' and take an oppositional standpoint in which black women are the speaking subjects. However, the paucity of black female academics in the UK who would or could describe themselves thus, means that we are between a rock and a hard place in trying to carve out a space to talk and write about race in an arena that is not dominated and silenced by African-American discourse. Siana Bangura observes:

As with all aspects of black life, American voices are louder – from literature to music to visual art, television and the world of social media – the black American experience is conflated with the experience of every other black person in the West. The single-narrative strikes again. (Bangura, 2015: 45)

As black feminist Heidi Mirza argues: 'To be black and be British is to be unnamed in official discourse' (1997: 3), and this, she argues, has created an unforgivable blind spot in much mainstream analysis. Her point informs my concern in this chapter to develop my thinking through my personal history of racialized encounters so I can explore the possible impact of engaging with black communities on police diversity training. I set out to comprehend the challenges of race in diversity training and how we can think about what is being brought into the training space and to determine what this might mean for black youth in their engagement with police. I investigate the components of diversity training in policing and explore the unintended consequences when of race becomes the topic. I begin with examining my feelings about the historical legacy of African enslavement by Europeans.

## **Roots of pain and anger**

In June 2018, I was in a Reading Room of the British Library, thinking about black youth, British policing and why I believed my voice as a black mother mattered. On my way out I stopped to look at the Windrush exhibition on display on the first floor (*Windrush: Songs in a Strange Land*, 2018). I was focused on the explanations of European enslavement of Africans and ensuing British colonization of African and Caribbean lands. One archived display was of an advertisement page of *The Antigua Gazette* dated 20 June 1816. I read, among the various items for sale, a consignment of limes, a gold hunting watch, and:

Slaves, Rachel, a good Washer and her son Anthony 13 years of age; Robert a stout healthy Boy, Lewis, a ditto, 8 years of age; Lucretia, a healthy Girl, 5 years of age; The 3 latter have lost their Mother and may be sold separate. They are offered at a low price, as their owner has no use for them. For particulars please apply to the Office of Sears & Greenway.

Another advertisement displayed offered a reward to whomever could ‘apprehend and deliver’ Patty, a Negro woman runaway slave being ‘the property of Mr A.H. Adams’ (British Library, 2018). At that moment, standing in the institutionally white space of the British Library, I felt anguish and anger about the degradation of the black women and black children, of the devastating legacy of the selling off of black souls and the horrors of African chattel slavery, and its present-day ramifications for black families.

## **‘Hard policing’: Young black men fighting back**

Moving on in the exhibition, I recognized my ‘self’ in the 1980s black anti-police protest photographs. At this point in my teenage years, from being called ‘half-caste’ or ‘red-skinned’ by others, I self-identified as black. In these photographs I recognized the fashion, the hairstyles and the need to protest. The 1970s and 80s were the years when I was part of a movement where teenagers recognized that, unlike their parents, Britain was their country of birth and they had a legal right to be here. This was a time where we ‘followed’ sound systems that were either soul or reggae, but whichever group one aligned oneself with, we all fell in and out of love in the 1970s, dancing to British Lovers Rock Janet Kay, Louisa Mark, and Jean Adebambo to mention a few. This was a time when a West Indian community showed the *Staying Power* examined in Peter Fryer’s 1984 book

of that name. However, this was also a time of severe police harassment of black communities, particularly, but not solely, of young black men. I remember seeing young black men being hassled or arrested by white police officers as they came out of a club. The dreaded police ‘Bully Vans’ (where black boys were often beaten up) sometimes sat outside the clubs as a real or imagined threat to us.

In April 1981, in response to a reported high level of street robbery in Brixton, the Metropolitan Police, bolstered by officers from the infamous Special Control Group, began ‘Operation Swamp’ based on the British ‘sus’ law. A retired police officer I interviewed during my research said of this period: ‘That was our MO – go down to Brixton, jump out of the van and arrest or beat up as many black men as we could.’ He told me about the canteen culture that prevailed: that ‘if they didn’t catch a black boy doing or having something illegal, they were just ‘sorting them out’ for doing something illegal in the past or the future. There were many reports of planting or fabricating evidence on ‘suspects’ during this era. The Black People’s Day of Action took place on 2 March 1981 and photographs of it are included in the British Library exhibition. It was an overwhelmingly peaceful march, but *The Sun* newspaper reported the event with the headline ‘The Day the Blacks Went Riot In London’ (Warner, 2017). There was anger in black communities over the police and politicians’ attitudes to the tragic New Cross Fire in which 13 black teenagers died, and aggressive racist Swamp 81 policing. Violent rioting took place in Brixton for three days, with documents reporting black youth’ – not wider white society – as ‘the enemy’.

### **Surveillance, black bodies, enslavement and policing**

In my research on the policing of, and impact on black bodies, I have come to learn that the embryo of many contemporary American policing departments is the white slave patrols of the Antebellum South. These patrols that were formed of white men incentivized to protect the economic order and interests of white plantation owners by capturing and abusing black bodies owned during African chattel slavery. Apart from the practice of lynching, many activists have drawn parallels with US and UK policing strategies engendering ‘colonial-style paramilitary methods’ to police black neighbourhoods (Cashmore and McLaughlin 1991: 34). The Institute of Race Relations (IRR) documented how the Metropolitan Police in the 1980s moved from individual ‘law and order’ policing to ‘public order’ strategies when policing black communities (IRR, 1987: 2). Specially trained riot squads such as the Special Patrol Group (SPG) gained notoriety for their



violent and racist tactics. A search of SPG police lockers after a National Front protest in 1979 revealed a number of unauthorized weapons, including a rhino whip, a customized lead weight truncheon and a sledgehammer (IRR, 1987: 3).

Puwar (2004) posits that the black body occupies a particular place in relation to questions of identity, power and subjectivity, and is regarded by white supremacists as having come from somewhere savage and uncivilized that necessitates control and taming (Puwar, 2004: 21). Drawing on the archives and legacy of transatlantic slavery studies to analyse how race structures the contemporary surveillance of black bodies, Simone Browne observes that 'Surveillance is nothing new to black folks. It is the fact of anti-blackness' (2015: 10). She furthers Fanon's (1986) work on the negative psychical effects of epidermalized surveillance of black subjects in her work *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. Browne avers that we can 'take transatlantic slavery as antecedent to contemporary surveillance technologies and practices, as they concern inventories of ships' cargo ... biometric identification by branding the slave's body with hot irons, slave markets and auction blocks as exercises of synoptic power where the many watched the few ...' (2015: 12).

### **Blaming the 'single West Indian mother'**

Following the 1981 Brixton disturbances, Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was reported in *The Times* on 10 July 1981, asking what the government could do if the parents concerned could not control the actions of their children (Solomos and Rackett, 1991: 55). *The Scarman Report* (1982) attributed the drift of African-Caribbean youth into crime and violence to weak family units, weakened through migration in which West Indian traditional family structures, especially the roles of 'single West Indian mothers' at the centre of those families, were being undermined by new demands, such as female paid work (1982). As we have seen, black people are often thus stereotyped, to provide a diversionary tactic to the 'real' issue. Scarman's 'single West Indian mother' is to blame for her lack of control of her inherently criminal offspring. What goes unremarked in the report is any critique of the invisible measure of Single Black Motherhood as against idealized White Married Motherhood. In an analysis of stereotypes of black women, Roberts argues that 'modern social pundits from Daniel Patrick Moynihan to Charles Murray have held black single mothers responsible for the disintegration of the black family and the black community's consequent despair' (1994: 874).

When I was married, I suppose on reflection that I felt 'respectable' while having four children, but when my status changed to 'single mother' I became acutely aware of the negative images of me and my children, especially as I lived in a predominantly white middle-class area. I over-compensated to ensure that my children were the most well-behaved wherever they went. In an analysis of black women stereotypes, Roberts observes that:

The reason for society's bleak assessment is not only the belief that black mothers are likely to corrupt their children, but that black children are predisposed to corruption. Blaming single mothers for 'nurturing a next generation of pathology' stigmatizes not only mothers but their children as well. The powerful Western image of childhood innocence does not seem to benefit black children. Black children are born guilty. They are potential menaces-criminals, crackheads and welfare mothers waiting to happen. (1994: 874)

Black mothers, I argue, project both a conscious and unconscious value-coded repertoire of white-sanctioned behaviour that psychosocially regulates and controls her black child.

### **Engaging with racial awareness training in an inner-city UK police service**

The Scarman Report made notable recommendations for police services but, particularly pertinent here, it was documented that police officer recruits should receive at least six months' training to be more prepared to police a multi-cultural society. Lord Scarman concluded that:

the disorders were communal disturbances arising from a complex political, social and economic situation, which is not special to Brixton. There was a strong racial element in the disorders, but they were not a race riot. The riots were essentially an outburst of anger and resentment by young black people against the police. (1982: 65)

This appears commendable, on consideration of these recommendations. However, what is the reality of six months of diversity training for police work in culturally diverse urban areas where tensions exist between the police and the black community?

Years after Stephen Lawrence's murder in 1993, Recommendations 48–54 of Macpherson's *Stephen Lawrence Inquiry* (1999) were that racism

awareness and valuing cultural diversity training should be undertaken by all employees in all UK police services. The Metropolitan Police Service Black Police Association (MBPA) presented the following statement to the Inquiry:

A second source of institutional racism is our culture, our culture within the police service. Much has been said about our culture, the canteen culture, the occupational culture. How and why does that impact on individuals, black individuals on the street? Well, we would say the occupational culture within the police service, given the fact that the majority of police officers are white, tends to be the white experience, the white beliefs and values. Given the fact that these predominantly white officers only meet members of the black community in confrontational situations, they tend to stereotype black people in general. This can lead to all sorts of negative views and assumptions about black people, so we should not underestimate the occupational culture within the police service as being a primary source of institutional racism in the way that we differentially treat black people.

While on an internship with an inner-city UK police service some years ago, I had the unforgettable experience of participating in/observing several Community Race Relations (CRR) workshops. It was hugely informative but rather disappointing.

### **The problem of 'race' in diversity training**

How was race defined, imagined and understood in CRR training? The CRR workshops were conducted in an experiential group setting, led by a facilitator and attended by staff and police officers, most of whom were white British. Stuart Hall (1994) asserts that there is a 'problem of race' for white society. I surmise that if race were not perceived as a problem, there would have been no CRR training in the first place. It is a fundamental part of my enquiry to explore what race might mean for white people in diversity training today and, therefore, how race has been historically and contextually defined, constructed and theorized. Although this chapter attempts to make some sense of contemporary issues of race and police diversity training, it is irrefutable that historical notions of race have proved contested and divisive. Arguably the dialectics of race in modern Britain have attempted to expunge historical racist ideology and practice, at least politically, by what Pitcher describes as 'revisionist narratives' (2009: 14). Pitcher furthers Hall's ideas and presents a contemporary paradox that suggests that 'dominant

discourses of race have arguably resulted in a situation where anti-racist discourses sit alongside — and are to a significant extent intertwined with — continuing racist practices’ (2009: 15). Anti-racist discourse requires, if not compels, us to think about race ‘backwards’, acknowledging the reality of difference, while reflecting on what the ‘anti-’ really means.

Participants undergoing diversity training need to think about the ‘beginning’, or what might be going on with their ideas of race. As a participant of the training (using myself as an example here), I will draw on many factors to consider the scenarios presented to me: my age, my heritage and my personal experiences of racialization. If the diversity training is experiential, the ‘race’ part of it will be presented to the group as an example of an anti-racist stance. For instance, a typical scenario might be as follows: ‘While in a team meeting, Ahmed makes disparaging remarks about a female co-worker. It is the first time you have heard Ahmed make such a disrespectful remark. What should you do?’

As I haven’t had much contact with Asian males, I would have to draw on the knowledge I do have, fill in the gaps I don’t know, and do so in a way that is mindful of being judged by others in the room. I might not even recognize that the ‘anti-racist’ scenario itself is stereotypically racist, as it assumes that ‘Ahmed’ is an Asian heterosexual male and so is sexist by nature. Gordon Allport defined a stereotype as ‘an exaggerated belief associated with a category’, and that ‘Its function is to justify (rationalize) our conduct in relation to that category’ (1979: 191).

If I worked in a majority white institution, I might consider that Ahmed’s co-worker in the scenario in question is white and heterosexual. If my contact with Asian males has been virtually nil, I would most likely draw on high profile media reports of, say, the Asian Rotherham paedophile ring, 9/11, Jihadist extremism, Boris Johnson’s Muslim women ‘letterbox’ comments. While realizing these are all negative representations, I will have a psychological struggle in dealing with my thoughts in what I determine to be a politically correct environment. Although a good facilitator should then deconstruct the participants’ (my) assumptions (i.e. that Ahmed is heterosexual and the co-worker is white), this requires intense emotional work by each participant and we will all undergo cognitive dissonance. Such is the ‘backlash’, the difficulties and antagonisms of the topic of race within diversity training that push employees through unwanted, mentally depleting exercises. Solórzano’s argument is useful here. He suggests that ‘when we think of welfare, crime, drugs, immigrants, and educational problems, we racialize these issues by painting stereotypic portraits of People of Color’ (Solórzano 1997: 10). The stereotyping of black people, particularly males,

as criminal, morally reprehensible and dangerous is ingrained in Western ahistoricism and maintained through racist institutional structures, policies and practices. All this has serious implications for the way black youth have been policed and are policed today.

### **Training participants who display emotional toil**

When observing CRR training, I was particularly struck by the varying degrees of emotional toil and turmoil of the 'journey' for most participants, something I had not hitherto considered or experienced as part of employee training or workshops. Many participants appeared to be unsure of how 'to be' in the workshop sessions. For example, several white police staff members thought the workshop sessions were going to help explain the 'latest terminology' for describing ethnic minority groups. One staff member, who was not a police officer, asked, 'Can we say half-caste anymore?' Another asked: 'I'm uncomfortable saying "black" as I'm white. Can I say black?'

In another session a white male traffic warden inquired: 'Are Yardies religious – because if they were, they wouldn't do such horrible things?' I admit that it was difficult not to roll my eyes. I observed that a minority of people in the room felt as I did, but others were clearly uncomfortable with the question and the mood in the room changed. I was present in the post-workshop debriefing session, where the workshop trainers' consensus was that the traffic warden and his question were 'a bit weird'.

When writing up my field notes that evening, I wondered whether the traffic warden wasn't weird but, rather, brave enough or stupid enough to raise his head above the parapet to actually ask a question on a topic that some participants appeared to know nothing about. Others in the room felt just as ignorant but didn't say anything, and others did not care about knowing nothing at all about race and racism. Why did I consider the traffic warden might be brave or stupid? Why did the trainers think him weird? The 'it' was 'race', and how certain bodies were imagined and verbalized clearly created feelings and emotions on individual and group levels. It was becoming apparent to me that the compulsory workshops were far more emotionally complex and complicated in ways and at levels than I had realized. Ballard and Parveen surmise that employees taking part in such programmes 'will not only have been told in no uncertain terms that racism is not only morally intolerable but is also a serious disciplinary offence' (2008: 4). As Alhejji (2015) points out, given that the effectiveness of diversity training programmes might enhance employee engagement when implementation is associated with rewards or the avoidance of sanctions, how effective can it be for white police officers to be compulsorily trained

to engage with black youth in ways other than those that are invariably hostile? Superintendent Roach, the Metropolitan Police Community Relations liaison in stated in 1978 that:

It is not part of community relations training in the Metropolitan Police to attempt to 'convert' an officer to a particular point of view or to change personal or political opinions. The purpose is rather to inculcate an understanding of the strategic importance of good police/community relations. (IRR, 1987: 67)

There are many members of the black community today who would argue that this is still the view of many white officers some 40 years later, in that black youth are the problem, and not white policing strategies. How might these defensive feelings impact on white police officers' engagement with black youth?

### **Exploring race and whiteness in police diversity training**

To speak of race in a contemporary context is not to deny the intersectionality of gender, class, religion and other differences; rather, it is to see how race is still often the modality through which many of these differences are experienced (Hall, 1994). In my experience of programmes since the CRR, I've seen participants who have seethed, boiled over or fumed about race. The point I want to make is that although participants are being trained or educated about race or diversity, there is little recognition in the training programmes, from conception to delivery, that the participants in the process are themselves racialized and diverse. Years of subjective experiences and a sense of identity in a cultural milieu affect a person's creation of meaning and production of knowledge, yet this is seldom acknowledged in a 'one-fits-all' training session. I contend, moreover, that one of the reasons for such turbulent and often toxic feelings is that participants bring their individual 'knowing' or 'common sense' about race into the programme, and this inevitably presents itself as problematic to the collective and the training objectives.

These observations and experiences lead me to accept that anxiety and defensiveness are always present in the room when discussing race in experiential, as opposed to unobserved e-learning, diversity training. What colours these feelings? Hollway and Jefferson aver that:

The concept of an anxious, defended subject is simultaneously psychic and social. It is psychic because it is a product of a unique biography of anxiety-provoking life-events and the manner in which they have been unconsciously defended against. (2000: 24)

Alhejji makes the point that much diversity work ‘focuses on the dynamic of minority-group oppression in majority-dominated social systems.’ (2015: 15)

I argue that both an individual and an organization can be a defended subject, by invoking the emotional labour of not wanting to be regarded as racist. Psychologists Richeson and Trawalter’s (2005) research suggests that many white people find ‘interracial contact’ mentally ‘depleting’, particularly in a politically correct context.

### **Placing anti-racism training in a policing context**

Sara Ahmed’s *On Being Included, Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (2012) argues that documents concerning diversity give institutions a physical form and these need to be tracked to see what they do. Given that institutions in the UK are predominantly white spaces, Ballard and Parveen’s discussion of white middle-class professionals and their workplace attitudes to racism is useful for exploring what might recede from view:

to the extent that ‘racism’ so envisaged is a product of intellectual and moral inadequacy, it follows that whilst such attitudes may be sustained by members of the lower social order, they are by definition the antithesis of the attitudes found among their educated and sophisticated social superiors. (2008: 4)

Ahmed’s work on racism and diversity in institutional life gives an account of the symbolic rather than the actual commitment to diversity within institutional whiteness.

My concern is to develop an intersectional analysis of the discursive links and disjunctions within and between discourses of theory and practice of racialization within the institutionally white space of UK policing to develop better strategies for inclusivity and anti-racism, particularly with black youth. I restate, many UK police services have had a turbulent and antagonistic relationship with much of the black community for many years, most notably exposed by the enduring tragic legacy of the racially motivated killing of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, the mishandling of the case and the subsequent Macpherson Report in 1999 that found the Metropolitan Police to be ‘institutionally racist’. Dalal suggests that the consequent change to the 1976 UK Race Relations (Amendment Act) 2000, which requires public bodies to provide mandatory diversity training to promote racial equality and consider the impact of policies and procedure on racial equality within the organization occurred ‘because the status quo is not sufficient’ (Dalal, 2012: 107).



## Conclusion

The 2011 Census evidences grim statistics of the lived reality for black youth in the UK. Compared to their white British peers, black Caribbean pupils are twice as likely to be temporarily excluded and three times as likely to be permanently excluded from school. Black Caribbean people are 9.6 times more likely to be stopped and searched and 3.8 times more likely to be arrested. Furthermore, they have the highest rate of detention under the Mental Health Act 1983 (Race Disparity Unit, 2019). Lindsay (1994) argues that as many institutions are centuries old, organizational strategies and implementations were created through a Eurocentric discourse where voices of difference did not need to be considered. 'Difference' is therefore an add-on for institutions – as is evident from the dearth of black academics, teachers, judges, police officers, politicians and leaders in white institutions, and the impossibility of making any significant inroads to change those statistics when black youth are impeded in their education.

As a black woman and mother, in deep thought at the British Library, I was haunted by the thought of 'Rachel' being hunted down, and the fate of the unnamed mother of 'Robert', 'Lewis' and 'Lucretia' who, being 'lost' to them, presumably had untimely deaths. Dorothy Roberts in her article on black mothers' work writes (quoting from Toni Morrison's *Beloved*) that when enslaved family members were auctioned off to different masters, 'slave mothers knew the regular pain of seeing their loved ones "rented out, loaned out, bought up, brought back, stored up, mortgaged, won, stolen or seized"' (Roberts, 1994: 875). I thought how, centuries later, the mothers of the New Cross Fire victims, Stephen Lawrence, Edson da Costa, Darren Cumberbatch, Shane Bryant and Rashan Charles and Mark Duggan lost their loved black children to untimely deaths. Maya Angelou wisely observed:

There is a kind of strength that is most frightening in Black women. It's as if a steel rod runs right through her head down to the feet. And I believe that we have to thank Black women not only for keeping the Black family alive, but [also] the white family ... Because Black women have nursed a nation of strangers. For hundreds of years, they literally nursed babies at their breasts who they knew, when they grew up, would rape their daughters and kill their sons. (cited in Elliott, 1989)

Angela J. Davis makes a crucial point when she writes: 'a black boy's flight from the police is just as likely to be a protective measure to avoid violence as



it is to result from consciousness of guilt' (2018: 86). Negative and vicarious experiences that black youth have encountered with institutionally white policing has engendered them unworthy of dignity, humanity and police protection, and this is why police training, on diversity or otherwise, needs to deal with the problems of black youth–police relations rather than, as I was told several times in my interviews, that 'race is a golden thread that runs through all training'.

In her autoethnography, 'I am an angry black woman', Rachel Griffin (2012) describes her emotionality, publicly expressing her pain at what might be perceived by hegemonic others as essentialist. However, the insistence of black women on using self-definitions to frame their work is incredibly powerful. It is core to the black feminist agenda, driving forward Lorde's idea (1992) that anger is positively productive. Research into how race is spoken about, not spoken about, experienced, taught, managed and interpellated within a predominantly white organization requires other conceptual tools that provide a synthesis of sociological, psychoanalytical, linguistic and political perspectives. As an Angry Black Woman in higher education I will continue to pick up Lorde's 'master's tools' and keep chipping away at the white block of institutional whiteness and racism.

## References

- Ahmed, S. (2012) *On Being Included: Racism and diversity in institutional life*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Alhejji, H. (2015) 'An Analysis of the Influence of Internal and External Factors on Diversity Training Design: A case study of a multinational corporation in Saudi Arabia'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Limerick.
- Allport, G.W. (1979) *The Nature of Prejudice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Ashley, W. (2014) 'The angry black woman: The impact of pejorative stereotypes on psychotherapy with black women'. *Social Work in Public Health*, 29 (1), 27–34.
- Ballard, R. and Parveen, T. (2008) 'Minority professionals' experience of marginalisation and exclusion: The rules of ethnic engagement'. In Eade, J., Barrett, M., Flood, C. and Race, R. (eds) *Advancing Multi-culturalism, Post 7/7*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 73–96.
- Bangura, S. (2015) 'I too am black and a feminist: On the importance of black British feminism'. *Media Diversified*, 13 March. Online. <https://tinyurl.com/vcqds35> (accessed 11 December 2019).
- BBC (2018) *Stephen: The Murder That Changed a Nation*. 3 episodes. BBC One Television, 17–19 April.
- British Library (2018) *Windrush: Songs in a strange land*. Exhibition held at the British Library, London, 1 June–21 October 2018.
- Browne, S. (2015) *Dark Matters: On the surveillance of blackness*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

- Bulman, M. (2018) 'Police custody deaths hit highest level in decade after 64 per cent increase in a year'. *The Independent*, 25 July. Online. <https://tinyurl.com/uxkfnjb> (accessed 6 December 2019).
- Cashmore, E. and McLaughlin, E. (eds) (1991) *Out of Order? Policing black people*. London: Routledge.
- Dalal, F. (2012) *Thought Paralysis: The virtues of discrimination*. London: Karnac Books.
- Dance, D.C. (1979) 'Black Eve or Madonna? A study of the antithetical views of the mother in black American literature'. In Bell, R.P., Parker, B.J. and Guy-Sheftall, B. (eds) *Sturdy Black Bridges: Visions of black women in literature*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 123–32.
- Davis, A.J. (ed.) (2018) *Policing the Black Man: Arrest, prosecution, and imprisonment*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Dodd, V. (2018) 'Stephen Lawrence murder: Police say they have run out of leads'. *The Guardian*, 11 April. Online. <https://tinyurl.com/y9td2pmv> (accessed 6 December 2019).
- Elliot, J.M. (ed.) (1989) *Conversations with Maya Angelou*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Etienne, J. (2016) *Learning in Womanist Ways: Narratives of first-generation African Caribbean women*. London: Trentham Books.
- Fanon, F. (1986) *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Pluto Press.
- Greengrass, P. (1999) *The Murder of Stephen Lawrence* [TV film]. Manchester: Granada Television.
- Griffin, R.A. (2012) 'I am an angry black woman: Black feminist autoethnography, voice, and resistance'. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 35 (2), 138–57.
- Hall, S. (1994) 'Cultural identity and diaspora'. In Williams, P. and Chrisman, L. (eds) *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 392–403.
- Hargreaves, J., Husband, H. and Linehan, C. (2017) *Police Workforce, England and Wales, 31 March 2017* (Statistical Bulletin 10/17). London: Home Office.
- Henning, K. (2018) 'Boys to men: The role of policing in the socialization of black boys'. In Davis, A.J. (ed.) *Policing the Black Man: Arrest, prosecution, and imprisonment*. New York: Vintage Books, 57–94.
- Hill Collins, P. (2000) *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.
- Hollway, W. and Jefferson, T. (2000) *Doing Qualitative Research Differently: Free association, narrative and interview method*. London: SAGE Publications.
- hooks, b. (1992) *Black Looks: Race and representation*. New York: Routledge.
- IRR (Institute of Race Relations) (1987) *Policing against Black People*. London: Institute of Race Relations.
- Lammy, D. (2017) *The Lammy Review: An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals in the criminal justice system*. London: Lammy Review. Online. <https://tinyurl.com/yyczt8zf> (accessed 9 December 2019).

- Lawrence, D. (1999) Address to the Stephen Lawrence Inquest. Quoted in Macpherson, W. *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*, 341–2. Document reference Cm 4262-I. London: UK Parliament. Online. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/277111/4262.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277111/4262.pdf) (accessed 3 August 2018).
- Lawson Bush, V. (2004) 'How black mothers participate in the development of manhood and masculinity: What do we know about black mothers and their sons?'. *Journal of Negro Education*, 73 (4), 381–91.
- Lindsay, C. (1994) 'Things that go wrong in diversity training: Conceptualization and change with ethnic identity models'. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 7 (6), 18–33.
- Lorde, A. (1992) 'Age, race, class, and sex: Women redefining difference'. In Andersen, M.L. and Hill Collins, P. (eds) *Race, Class, and Gender: An anthology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 495–502.
- Mirza, H.S. (ed.) (1997) *Black British Feminism: A reader*. London: Routledge.
- Morrison, T. (1992) *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the literary imagination*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Pitcher, B. (2009) *The Politics of Multi-culturalism: Race and racism in contemporary Britain*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Puwar, N. (2004) *Space Invaders: Race, gender and bodies out of place*. Oxford: Berg.
- Race Disparity Unit (2019) 'Ethnicity facts and figures: Black Caribbean ethnic group'. Online. <https://tinyurl.com/seblomu> (accessed 11 December 2019).
- Richeson, J.A. and Trawalter, S. (2005) 'Why do interracial interactions impair executive function? A resource depletion account'. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 88 (6), 934–47.
- Roberts, D.E. (1994) 'The value of black mothers' work'. *Connecticut Law Review*, 26 (3): 871–8. Online. <https://tinyurl.com/sytcyj2> (accessed 30 January 2020).
- Scarman, L.G. (1982) *The Scarman Report: The Brixton Disorders 10–12 April 1981: Report of an inquiry*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Solomos, J. and Rackett, T. (1991) 'Policing and urban unrest: Problem constitution and policy response'. In Cashmore, E. and McLaughlin, E. (eds) *Out of Order? Policing black people*. London: Routledge, 42–64.
- Solórzano, D.G. (1997) 'Images and words that wound: Critical race theory, racial stereotyping, and teacher education'. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 24 (3), 5–19.
- Warner, T. (2017) '9 important London Black History landmarks: Black Peoples' Day of Action, 1981'. Online. <https://tinyurl.com/wq9bp78> (accessed 11 December 2019).